

What is claimed is:

1 1. A zoom lens comprising: a first lens group having a negative refractive power as a
2 whole, a second lens group having a positive refractive power as a whole, and a third lens group
3 having a positive refractive power as a whole, arranged in said order from object side to image
4 side, for zooming from a wide-angle end to a telephoto end as well as for correcting image surface
5 changes required in accordance with said zooming by means of moving said second lens group and
6 said third lens group from image side to object side; wherein
7 said first lens group consists of a lens having a negative refractive power and a prism for
8 changing a light path arranged in said order from the object side.

1 2. A zoom lens claimed in claim 1 wherein,
2 said second lens group consists of a lens having a positive refractive power; and
3 an aperture stop is provided between said second lens group and said third lens group.

1 3. A zoom lens claimed in claim 1 wherein,
2 said first lens group's lens has an aspherical surface.

1 4. A zoom lens claimed in claim 3 wherein,
2 said aspherical surface is formed on a surface with a smaller curvature radius.

1 5. A zoom lens claimed in claim 4 wherein,

2 said aspherical surface is formed to have a weaker negative refractive power weakening toward its
3 periphery.

1 6. A zoom lens claimed in claim 1 wherein,
2 said third lens group has at least one lens with a positive refractive power and at least one lens with
3 a negative refractive power.

1 7. A zoom lens claimed in claim 6 wherein,
2 said third lens group has a lens at a position closest to the object having a positive refractive power
3 and an aspherical surface at least on one side.

1 8. A zoom lens claimed in claim 1 wherein,
2 the prism of said first lens group is formed to have an entrance surface and an exit surface both
3 oblong in a direction perpendicular to a plane that includes an entrance axis and an exit axis.

1 9. A zoom lens claimed in claim 1 that satisfies the following equations (1) and (2):

2 (1) $0.25 < |f_w/f_1| < 0.7$, and

3 (2) $v_1 > 40$,

4 where f_1 : focal length of the first lens group,

5 f_w : focal length of the total lens system at the wide-angle end, and

6 v_1 : Abbe number of the first lens group's lens

1 10. A zoom lens claimed in claim 1 wherein,
2 said first, second, and third lens groups are all made of resin materials.

1 11. A zoom lens claimed in claim 2 wherein,
2 said first lens group's lens has an aspherical surface.

1 12. A zoom lens claimed in claim 2 wherein,
2 said third lens group has at least one lens with a positive refractive power and at least one lens with
3 a negative refractive power.

1 13. A zoom lens claimed in claim 3 wherein,
2 said third lens group has at least one lens with a positive refractive power and at least one lens with
3 a negative refractive power.

1 14. A zoom lens claimed in claim 2 wherein,
2 the prism of said first lens group is formed to have an entrance surface and an exit surface both
3 oblong in a direction perpendicular to a plane that includes an entrance axis and an exit axis.

1 15. A zoom lens claimed in claim 3 wherein,
2 the prism of said first lens group is formed to have an entrance surface and an exit surface both
3 oblong in a direction perpendicular to a plane that includes an entrance axis and an exit axis.

1 16. A zoom lens claimed in claim 2 that satisfies the following equations (1) and (2):

2 (1) $0.25 < |f_w/f_1| < 0.7$, and

3 (2) $v_1 > 40$,

4 where f_1 : focal length of the first lens group,

5 f_w : focal length of the total lens system at the wide-angle end, and

6 v_1 : Abbe number of the first lens group's lens

1 17. A zoom lens claimed in claim 3 that satisfies the following equations (1) and (2):

2 (1) $0.25 < |f_w/f_1| < 0.7$, and

3 (2) $v_1 > 40$,

4 where f_1 : focal length of the first lens group,

5 f_w : focal length of the total lens system at the wide-angle end, and

6 v_1 : Abbe number of the first lens group's lens

1 18. A zoom lens claimed in claim 9 wherein,

2 said first, second, and third lens groups are all made of resin materials.

1